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Chairman: Mr. VAN DER HEIJDEN (Netherlands)
(Vice-Chairman)

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[illegible] Aukan (Slovenia), Mr. Van Der Heijden (Netherlands), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 110: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued) (A/48/332 and A/48/359)

1. Mr. RATA (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of Australia and Canada, said that transnational crime had become too large a problem to be dealt with by individual countries. Criminals were exploiting the same technological advances in transportation and communication that had led to a growth in legitimate international trade. Organized transnational crime not only bribed officials and engendered political corruption but also generated violence, threatened Governments and inhibited economic and social development.

2. Through the creation of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the international community had acknowledged that the traditional approach to law enforcement was no longer adequate. Countries must collectively adopt effective measures and respond flexibly to help each other in the fight against crime. Australia, Canada and New Zealand had enacted domestic legislation on mutual assistance in criminal matters. However, while new initiatives against transnational crime were welcome, they must not duplicate work already being carried out by other international bodies within and outside the United Nations. In view of the limited resources available to the international community, the fight against organized crime must be focused and conducted in a coordinated manner.

3. Australia, Canada and New Zealand wholeheartedly supported the draft Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women recommended by the Economic and Social Council for adoption by the General Assembly (A/C.3/48/L.5).

4. Concerning the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, to be held in 1995, the three countries welcomed the new rule of procedure requiring the submission of draft resolutions four months prior to the Congress; it was their understanding, however, that last-minute amendments on non-substantive matters would be permitted.

5. An effective international crime prevention and criminal justice programme would enhance global progress in other important areas such as economic and social development and the promotion of human rights. Therefore, adequate funding of United Nations initiatives in that area would allow the Organization to meet requests from Member States for assistance and ensure implementation of existing standards.

6. Mr. WOON (Malaysia) said that the selection by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice of organized transnational crime as its first priority was justified, especially as such crime threatened the security and stability of countries, was a major cause of corruption and subverted national economies and political structures. International cooperation was required in order to control if not to eradicate organized crime. Since organized crime had

(Mr. Woon, Malaysia)

close links with the proliferation of drugs and narcotics trafficking, and since the scale and sophistication of the illicit drug trade could not be tackled by any single country, the international community needed to share intelligence at all levels in combating that plague.

7. The Commission should continue studying that question with a view to coming up with realistic suggestions, and in that regard should coordinate its work with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Malaysia welcomed the convening in Italy in 1994 of a World Ministerial Conference on Organized Transnational Crime and of the International Conference on Laundering and Controlling Proceeds of Crime.

8. The international community could also share experiences and information in the prevention of urban, juvenile and violent crime - the second priority area selected by the Commission - through non-enforcement means. Law-enforcement methods should continue to win the confidence of the general public, which was essential if law enforcement officers were to perform their functions effectively. The officers should be involved in community development and education of the young: moral education must start at an early age and form the very foundation of crime prevention.

9. His country was horrified at the atrocities committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and considered "ethnic cleansing" as an organized crime that flagrantly violated human rights. It therefore welcomed the establishment of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991.

10. Ms. HORIUCHI (Japan) stressed the essential need for international cooperation to combat crime and promote legal reform, particularly through training programmes and information activities on crime prevention and criminal justice. Measures against newly emerging crimes such as transnational, organized, environmental and drug-related crime would only be effective if they were coordinated by the countries concerned. There was increasing interest on the part of developing countries in technical cooperation, advisory services and other types of assistance which would help to ease such problems as lack of skilled personnel and technological know-how. While it was important to meet the needs of Member States in new areas of crime prevention and criminal justice, paramount concern should be to enhance the effectiveness of activities relating to current priorities.

11. Her Government hoped that the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders would contribute further to international cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice. Japan, through the Ministry of Justice and the National Police Agency and in cooperation with the Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, had conducted international seminars on organized crime and drug-related crime in Asia.

12. Mr. EL DEEB (Egypt) said that his country devoted particular attention to crime prevention and hoped to adopt programmes to ensure effective coordination of crime-prevention activities, which were inspired by the values of Egyptian civilization and Islamic culture. Egyptian laws guaranteed the rights of litigants before the courts, since justice was the basis of stability.

13. The international community was called upon to fight the rising rates of crime, and in particular organized crime. His delegation therefore welcomed the forthcoming World International Conference on Organized Transnational Crime. Egypt also looked forward to the 1995 Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, at which international cooperation would be discussed, experience exchanged and preventive measures proposed in the interests of more effective crime prevention. Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure the success of the Congress by providing the requisite resources and ensuring implementation of its recommendations. The holding of the Congress for the first time in Africa would help to strengthen international cooperation with African countries. Crime prevention was an essential component of economic and social development. In that connection, he urged the international community to increase its financial support for the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, whose activities were described in the Secretary-General's report (A/48/332).

14. His delegation also commended the activities of, and called for increased support for, the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch, which had recently been upgraded pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/91.

15. Mr. LIN Chongfei (China) said that the statement of principles and programme of action of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, approved by the General Assembly in resolution 46/152, had provided States with guidelines and policies. However, many requests from the developing countries for technical cooperation to implement those policies had for years been left unfulfilled, as a result of the serious financial difficulties of the United Nations. His delegation hoped that all developed countries and international financing institutions would review their aid programmes to ensure that adequate contributions went to the field of criminal justice.

16. Although crime prevention relied primarily on national efforts, international cooperation against all types of crime, especially organized transnational crime, was also of vital importance. His delegation hoped that Member States would adopt effective measures of inter-State cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice to curb the spread of international crime. Crime prevention in particular should be a priority of the United Nations system and specifically of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

17. Recent measures to further open up his country to the outside world had brought about rapid economic development and significant progress in legislation and law enforcement. China was facing new problems in the field of criminal justice; certain types of crime, such as economic crime, were on the rise. In its struggle to combat crime, his Government could learn from other States and was ready to engage in technical cooperation with them.

18. Mr. TSEPOV (Russian Federation) said that since many countries were experiencing a rise in organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism, the fight against crime was of vital importance to the entire international community. The Ministerial Meeting on the Creation of an Effective United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, held in 1991, had laid the foundation for further cooperation in combating crime within the United Nations system. The establishment of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which recommended specific measures to implement the principles and programme of action in General Assembly resolution 46/152, had promoted international cooperation in the fight against organized crime, drug trafficking and money-laundering.

19. His delegation supported the decision of the Economic and Social Council to convene the World Ministerial Conference on Organized Transnational Crime in Italy in 1994, which would focus on finalizing national legislation, defining the most effective forms of international cooperation and drafting international instruments to strengthen joint action against organized crime. In preparation for that Conference, it would be useful to study the possibility of elaborating under United Nations auspices, international instruments and models for bilateral agreements in that field. The Russian Federation was ready to cooperate closely in that endeavour. It had also co-sponsored Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/30 on control of the proceeds of crime, which recommended a review of relevant national legislation and its practical implementation. Governments should be provided with guidelines and principles for the discovery and investigation of money-laundering and the treatment of offenders. In that regard, the International Conference on Laundering and Controlling Proceeds of Crime, also to be held in Italy in 1994, would constitute a timely contribution to the fight against organized crime.

20. A priority of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was to improve technical assistance in order to obtain the most practical results from international cooperation and exchanges of information. In that regard, his delegation wished to express its gratitude to the Economic and Social Council for endorsing the decision of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to provide assistance and expertise for a large-scale project to upgrade the criminal-justice system in the Russian Federation which included introducing, on an experimental basis, the trial-by-jury system for most dangerous crimes, establishing an information collection system and drafting new legislation.

21. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should be commended for its timely discussion of the systematic violence committed against women during armed conflicts, which was an important step in resolving the problem of protecting victims of such conflicts. Its work, together with that of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights, would help to promote humanitarian initiatives in the General Assembly and other international forums.

22. His delegation was particularly alarmed at the sharp rise in crime in Russia where, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, there were several thousand groups of organized criminals, many of which were well-armed and had ties to international crime. The number of crimes involving the use of arms had

(Mr. Tsepov, Russian Federation)

increased by 300 per cent since the previous year. His country was well aware that crime went beyond international borders, and was working together with other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States to conclude multilateral agreements in the fight against crime and drug trafficking. However, regional cooperation did not suffice: the fight against crime required the efforts of the entire international community, and in that regard the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had a decisive role to play in directing those efforts.

23. Mrs. SHERMAN-PETER (Bahamas), speaking on behalf of the twelve States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), emphasized the contribution which the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had made towards developing an effective response to rising crime and the serious social and economic problems which it engendered. The priority themes identified by the Commission to guide its work for the period from 1992 through 1996 provided a sound basis for formulating and implementing practical policies and programmes to improve the effectiveness of global efforts in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. With regard to the invitation extended to Member States to assist the Commission in its strategic management of the crime programme by making proposals on specific objectives and activities in that area, the CARICOM States believed that those proposals would be most effective if made within the context of the priority themes.

24. The technical assistance and professional services in crime prevention and criminal justice provided by the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch were of particular importance to the developing countries. An increasing number of countries were requesting those services and it was hoped that they would be expanded to accommodate as many requests as possible. While the CARICOM States considered it useful that professional services of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch were utilized for United Nations peace-keeping operations, it believed that the Branch must remain focused on the priority areas agreed to by the Commission and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council.

25. Two significant conferences scheduled to take place under the auspices of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch in 1994 - the International Conference on Laundering and Controlling Proceeds of Crime and the World Ministerial Conference on Organized Transnational Crime - would address crime issues affecting numerous countries in the developed and developing world. The capacity of developing countries to participate in those two conferences, however, would be limited owing to resource constraints. Such considerations should be taken into account in further planning for the conferences. Furthermore, since work had been done in the area of money-laundering and organized crime by other international bodies, every effort should be made to avoid duplication of efforts. The Compendium of United Nations Standards and Norms in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice greatly facilitated United Nations efforts to promote implementation of those standards and norms at the national, regional and international levels, and should be widely disseminated and used in the analytical study of contemporary crime problems.

(Mrs. Sherman-Peter, Bahamas)

26. The Commission's initiative on violence against women reinforced the work of other competent bodies concerned with women's rights, including the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The CARICOM States agreed with the proposals the Commission had made to counteract violence against women and to include that issue on the agenda of the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The new format adopted for the Congress should make it a forum for discussion on major practical strategies in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice at the national, regional and international levels and should also increase the capacity of the developing countries to assume a more participatory role in the Congress. The CARICOM States believed that the advance submission of draft resolutions to be adopted by the Congress provided time for their consideration and should facilitate their adoption. Decision-making at the Ninth Congress should, however, be more coherent.

27. The interregional, regional and associated institutes in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice were making a significant contribution through technical assistance and research projects. The CARICOM States urged international funding agencies and potential donors to consider ways of supporting those institutes, especially in developing countries.

28. The CARICOM States were pleased with the efforts of the Commission and the Branch to forge cooperative relations with other organs of the United Nations system involved in crime-related issues. As a result of organizational changes in the United Nations social development structure, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had been transferred to New York, while the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch remained in Vienna. Now was an opportune time to consider the status of the Branch; failure to do so could seriously undermine the effectiveness of the crime programme. Account should be taken of the General Assembly's decision to upgrade the Branch into a division.

29. The CARICOM States regretted that requests for assistance had increased without a corresponding increase in the allocation of resources for crime-prevention programmes. It was essential to allocate an appropriate level of resources for crime prevention and criminal justice, which was an essential element in resolving social development problems in general.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.